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SUBJECT: SURINAME'S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK PROGRAMMING --
RELEVANT AND WIDELY ATTENDED

REF: 09 STATE 114869

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. Three International Education Week (IEW) programs showcased to Surinamers the value of studying foreign languages and studying abroad. Post organized two American Corner "English Language Story Hours," one for elementary school and one for junior high/high school students. Post also hosted an International Education Week program at the Embassy, which featured three speakers who highlighted opportunities for Surinamers to study, learn, and participate in exchange experiences in the United States. The International Education Week programming reached a total of 200 youth and 30 teachers and educational administrators, as well as a wider audience through television coverage. The demand for the event at the Embassy exceeded maximum room capacity, and Post is planning to hold additional, follow-up sessions in order to meet that demand. Post also organized an English Language Specialist-led project to develop an English language text book with local English teachers, and will soon host a conference on approaching the accreditation process with Suriname's only university and its Fulbright Senior Specialist - both IEW-friendly initiatives that did not occur during the week. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Post coordinated two American Corner "English Language Story Hour" events with the Cultural Center of Suriname (CCS), which houses the American Corner. Poloff and Econoff read two children's books to approximately 50 elementary school students, and discussed the importance of reading and English language learning. Following the reading, the American Corner staff provided the children with a tour of the American Corner and its library.

¶3. (U) We geared our second "English Language Story Hour," to junior high/high school students, which featured Ambassador John R. Nay as the guest reader, reading an excerpt from Steinbeck's *A Wayward Bus* --- one of the books on the Ministry of Education's suggested high school reading list. The Ambassador discussed the joys and challenges of reading with the forty-six secondary school students and two teachers. Afterwards, the Ambassador delivered 35 books from the suggested high school reading list to the American Corner, and American Corner staff provided tours of the Corner to the students. The "Youth Journal," a popular youth-oriented daily ten-minute news program, covered the event and interviewed the Ambassador about reading and language learning.

¶4. (U) Post also organized a special three-part program on international education opportunities at the Embassy. The program consisted of a Digital Video Conference (DVC) with Dr. Gail Dobbs Tidemann, Dean of Continuing and Extended Education at South Dakota State University, on "Distance Learning Opportunities for International Students"; a presentation by Suriname's primary Youth Exchange and Study Program Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES) Coordinator, Mr. Dave Abeleven, on how to apply for the 2010 YES Program; and a presentation by EducationUSA Advisor Judith Dijks on "Studying Abroad in the U.S." The program highlighted opportunities for Surinamers to study physically or remotely in the United States. This event was filled to maximum capacity with 75 individuals, consisting of high school and university students, teachers, representatives from the Ministry of Education, and other embassy contacts who had expressed an interest in U.S. educational opportunities. This event was advertised to key contacts and

generated more interest than capacity. Post's EducationUSA advisor plans to organize follow-up events due to the high demand for information, especially on distance learning opportunities.

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